

## About Me

Hello, my name is Cecil Hammett. I was born and raised in a town called Huntsville, located in north Alabama, USA. My father lived on a farm, so anytime I would visit his home as a child, I was always outside running through the trails or playing with the animals. I never understood how much that impacted who I was until I took a second to look back on my life. In my short twenty-one years of life, I've experienced many things that have pushed me to evolve, change, and mold into the person I am supposed to be; however, there is one part of me that has always been constant: my sense of adventure. It is a part of me that originated from years and years of running barefoot through the mud on a somewhat invisible path most certainly made by a deer that would later evolve to be the driving force that carries me across the globe.

From a very young age, I have always preferred to take the path less followed. Better stated in the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." or what I take to mean, "If I were meant to stay in one place, I would have roots instead of feet." Once I graduated high school, my desire to do something bold with my life was almost boiling over. So as my first of many bold decisions, I chose to attend Fordham University in New York City rather than a southern state university, something most of my peers did growing up in Alabama. Although I did not know one person at Fordham before arriving, I did not let that stop me. I ended up making life-long friends at Fordham I will cherish forever. I still believe Fordham was the best school for me to begin my academic journey; however, at the end of my second year of university, I was unsure if it was the right place for me to finish.

There are some things in life you can only get when you fight for them. I learned the significance of this statement a few years ago when what I was fighting for was my life. At the age of sixteen, my care-free childhood was ripped from my grasp by an extremely rare and aggressive form of pediatric cancer. It stormed into my life like a hurricane, ravaging and devastation everything—and everyone—in its path.

Today as a proud and happy cancer survivor, I know that the day I was diagnosed, June 23, 2015, will forever mark one of the most significant moments of my life. It was not until I felt like I was lying in the ruins of my own body that I was able to truly find myself. Being so far away from everything I had known growing up, being so distant from what felt like everyone I knew due to my illness, allowed me to find who I was with no outside impact. Cancer taught me that life is so beautiful and so precious. It gave me the confidence to know that I am capable of achieving anything I put my mind too. Because of cancer, I take every opportunity given to me to leap with no fear of falling.

Perhaps my next "leap" was my decision to not only transfer schools halfway through my university career, but to transfer to Queensland University of Technology-- a university on the opposite side of the world. Moving to Australia challenged and expanded the boundaries of my comfort zone in every way. It was not always easy being

so far away from everything, and everyone, I knew. Living and studying in a foreign country came with challenges no one could have prepared me for. I was submerged in a world like nothing I've ever known. Australia pushed me to become an even more diverse and educated version of myself.

If you've made it this far into my story and would like to learn more, please feel free to look at some of my writing linked below. As for what my future holds, I now plan to enter the workforce. I can assure you this next decision, or leap, will be one made with an open heart, clear mind, and nothing but incredible expectations for what the future holds.